

Media is a huge factor in why we perceive the world and ourselves in the way we do. Commercials and advertisements are no different. Product, and consumerism and in turn advertisements and commercials infest our society and way of life. Most people would probably assume it's just due to the fact that we may purchase some of the products we see or due to the fact we see them everyday against our will but fail to assess how it can also help us make sense of things that may confuse us when tackling them alone or reinforce certain ideals we may have already been taught. Solidifying them as a part of our lives, identity, and moral code for the rest of our time on earth. A huge subject that has become somewhat of a normality within advertisements are ideas of gender, particularly masculinity and femininity seem to be the real biggest aspects in how products are presented, especially in ones that are more so directed towards one or the other. Gender is a confusing and ever changing construct that no one seems to agree upon. It is a topic and idea that is so ingrained to an individual and their upbringing and beliefs instead of being treated like the nuisance and complex topic it is. Sex and gender are closely tied in how they affect each other in turn affecting how we ourselves view and treat it. For example, In the first chapter of Amy Vita Kesselman and Nancy Schniedewind's book Women: Images & Realities. A Multicultural Anthology they discussed how feminist scholars argue about how the social construct of gender effects talks about sex, causing many believe the two are one in the same not that they are interchangeable. Sex itself is not just a basis of science anymore it is also heavily dictated by the role of gender and how society will view you.

In the case of this particular commercial this is clearly an ad aiming to reach the cis heterosexual men of the world with hygiene as well as just personal self care like skincare, therapy, hair and nail care are often seen as weak or feminine due to the ideas of men not being in need of those and being independent or "strong", so in response many hygienic companies will make products specially geared towards men in order for them to feel more comfortable purchasing it. The hygiene company AXE is perhaps the most notorious for this type of marketing. Often having very strong scents in dark intimidatingly designed bottoms with scent names like "Black Temptation" or "Phoenix" as a way to make using scented hygiene products sound more masculine than they are usually perceived and marketed. This commercial in particular is meant to promote their line of body spray. The way this product is portrayed in the advertisement demonstrates how using the product will allow men to sleep with whoever they want, and whenever they want, with the skinny mustached young man in the commercial getting with this slim more fairskind brunette after the use of the spray. However, there is one side effect to using this product; "cuddling". This is used as a sort of negative connotation as the man in the commercial was not just able to sleep with the girl and move on, due to the effect of the spray, the girl wants to receive some sort of "aftercare" or affection after the intimate act they had engaged in the previous night. This ad reinforces an idea that men might not want to participate in hygienic acts unless it will result in them getting something out of it. Rather than just for the sake of personal benefit. The commercial seemingly tries to sell this product, albeit in a way that attempts to be comedic, as a method that allows you to pick up and sleep with any women you test it out on, with the side effect being she may grow attached to you with the intimacy after the act hindering your ability to do daily activities and pursue other women. This ad drew some parallels between the self proclaimed "pick-up artists" that have been seen plaguing the internet today and even television and books in previous decades. While this commercial takes a more comedic, possibly even ironic approach to the similar themes of these

personalities. The principle is all the same. Use some cheap gimmick, pick up line, or fragrance and women will be more entitled to liking you which will result in them being more entitled to sleeping with you. Reinforcing the idea that women are nothing more than sexual objects and you have to use different manipulative tactics in order to sleep with them.

The ad strikes on the idea that women often want more intimacy than anything and do not or rather should not want to embrace and express themselves sexually, that it is the man's job to want sex and the women simply oblige if they like him enough. This first thought can be related to the thought presented in the film 'Killing Us Softly' by director Sut Jhally and speaker Jean Kilbourne. Particularly the fourth installment in of this series of films touches on this subject matter briefly, speaking about how women's bodies or body images are often mixed in with the product being sold. Morphing the said product into a hybrid between it and the women's body in order to make it more appealing. The AXE advertisement uses this idea in a similar manner. In that the use of the product will allow you to gain access to a woman's body and you can use it to get what you want out of them. Selling a product to men with the presentation of female validation, attention, and sexual engagement is a common practice and often time is a working factor as to why these ads work and get so much attention. In this advertisement the woman that is depicted clearly desires more intimacy than a purely sexual relationship, which an idea in itself is a stereotype and blatantly wrong idea. The film 'She's Beautiful When She's Angry' explores this misconception further in telling of a point in the early feminist movement when women aimed to dive more into, understand, and take control of their sexuality and sexual desire, with their sexual experiences only being initiated by their husbands who once they are satisfied, the wives satisfaction is often an afterthought. This implies women never actually just want what the man wants but always something more due to their "nature". The film also tells how women once entering more sexually liberating learning and practices due to the feminist movement, they had engaged in and been more comfortable engaging in sexual activity afterwards.

Body image is often a point of contention in the eyes of women specifically. Bigger women are often not depicted in commercials due to the fact they are deemed undesirable to the general populace of men and by proxy, advertisers. Marielena Zuniga puts it best in the 'Gender in the Media' portion of the 'Women: Images & Realities, A Multicultural Anthology' in a quote from Carolyne M. Byerly. She states that "The pattern we see, then, is that women are told they need to be thinner, wear certain kinds of clothing, which in Western countries helps sexualize women", continuing to say "It tells them there's something wrong with them, with the person they are and the body they were born into." (Zuniga 93). These quotes explain how thinner women are inherently valued more than those who are bigger and often depicted in commercials as a means of sexual desire and nothing else. This commercial was most likely created with the intention of some man to insert himself within the shoes of the man on screen so that he too could possibly have the chance to sleep with a woman who looks similar to the women in the commercial if they use this product that should inevitably be used every day regardless.

What seems to be revealed here is that we should all take the time to deeper understand the perpetuation of social construct within our media and within our advertisements, attempting to remain wary of ones that could be negative or harmful. It can be assumed that the female audience who viewed this advertisement may have had a different view on it than the ones it was aimed towards, not in a way where we have to include everyone in everything but in a way where we are more aware of the images we

choose we to perpetuate, i.e, the messages we choose to send. Even within the brevity of a commercial, men and women should be reduced to basic stereotypes.